



Arlington Youth Health and Safety Coalition December 2021 Minutes

Date: November 2, 2021

Time: 5:30- 6:30pm

Location: Virtual (via Zoom)

Staff Present: Kayla Vodka

Attendance: Cindy Bouvier (Arlington School District), Bryan White (Arlington Police Department), Eric Helmuth (Arlington Select Board), Kathy Hirsch (Arlington School District), Christy Kiernan (Arlington Catholic), Carlene Newell (Arlington School District), Colleen Leger (Arlington Youth Counseling Center)

Introductions

And year in review about accomplishments and concerns group has noticed. Overwhelming concern is centered on the mental health of youth, parents, and the community in general.

Accomplishments:

- Bryan appointed advisor for the Creating Connections program between APD and AHS
- Kathy mentioned how proud she is of the students for making it through another transitional year, another "new normal"
- Cindy acknowledges the silver lining of moving events or educational sessions to a Zoom format has addressed barriers such as childcare, transportation, etc.

Minutes

Attendees reviewed the September meeting minutes. Carlene moved to approve, Cindy seconded, and all approved the September meeting minutes

Committee Updates:

BSAS MassCALL3 grant: Kayla updates the group on the scope of the MassCALL3 grant that Arlington has received in partnership with Somerville, Lexington, and Everett. MassCALL3 focuses on youth substance use prevention while emphasizing racial equity.

Eight principals of the grant are:

1. Racial equity
2. Trauma-informed service provisions
3. Positive youth development
4. Intersectionality
5. Cultural humility

6. Restorative justice
7. Collective impact
8. Build and sustain the leadership of people of color.

Colleen suggests partnering with CHNA 17, which prioritizes racial equity in their regional work.

Kathy suggests Anti-racism working group, Black Student Union Group, and the GSA at the high school as resources.

YRBS and Survey Data:

Group acknowledges that vaping rates have decreased

Significant disparities exist for students of color and genderqueer students

Three top concerns from the Coalition Survey are:

1. Mental Health
2. Substance Use
3. Racial Equity

Strategic Planning - Mental Health:

- Group brainstorms existing resources in the community and schools for mental health services, Kathy speaks about the counselors, social workers, and the Harbor/Short-Stop programs at the high school. All are at capacity.
- AYCC also has a significant waiting list for youth in the community
- Bryan mentions APD has a new Mental Health Clinician, Christina, who does both ride along and follow-ups in the community
- Kathy also mentions that due to long waitlists for in-house programs, counselors have started utilizing Interface, which has about a 2 week waitlist. There has been success in placing individuals with counselors through Interface.
- Kathy also mentions how supportive and integral the school nurses have been in providing mental health and overall support for ASD students
- Cindy updates the group about a program looking at the policies and procedures around grief and loss for k-12 grades.

Action Items:

- o Find ways to support parents and the whole family as well as the youth. Resources guide? Advertising of what is available?
- o Reach out to Arlington EATS on ways to partner with them on providing resources to families in need

Current Asks/Need

- a. *Coalition Recruitment and Structure* - Find ways to expand membership, business community, hospital liaisons, parent

and youth. A new structure might encourage engagement (e.g. Quarterly meetings and monthly workgroups)

- b. *Blog/Newspaper Contributor* - Volunteer to write monthly articles for the paper/newsletter/blog
- c. *Key Informant Interviews and Focus Groups* - Caregivers are needed for a focus group! There will be gift cards for compensation. 30minutes - 1hour
- d. *Volunteer of the Month Submissions!* - Please submit nominations for us to feature volunteers in the Arlington community who have contributed significantly to helping to create a happier and healthier Arlington.

Meeting adjourned at 6:30 pm.